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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL DIALOGUE PROCEEDING

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Chris Stevens, per reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Palestinian President Abbas agreed with Hamas representatives May 28 to divide the National Dialogue into three separate tracks: a Ramallah track on the prisoners' initiative; a Gaza track on easing Fatah-Hamas tensions; and a PLO track, possibly to take place in Cairo, on reforming and restructuring the PLO. On May 29, Abbas departed for Tunis for meetings with Fatah Central Committee (FCC) head Farouq Qaddumi. PLO Chief Negotiator Sa'eb Erekat told APO May 30 that his office is preparing the legal groundwork for a national referendum. End summary.

#### National Dialogue

¶2. (C) Representatives of the main Palestinian factions May 27-29 continued discussions in Ramallah without agreement. During a May 28 meeting chaired by President Abbas, the participants agreed to divide the discussions into three separate tracks:

-- A Ramallah track focused on reaching consensus on the prisoners' initiative.

-- A Gaza track focused on reducing Fatah-Hamas tensions surrounding the formation of a separate MOI Special Security Force. Senior Fatah and Hamas officials in Gaza are to lead these discussions in advance of more formal talks between Abbas and PM Isma'il Haniyyah.

-- A separate track for discussions on reforming and restructuring the PLO, with the aim of integrating Hamas and PIJ into the PLO. Abbas announced his intention to hold a meeting of PLO faction heads next month, possibly in Cairo, to discuss these issues.

¶3. (C) During the May 28 meeting, Abbas rejected a Hamas request to move all the National Dialogue talks to Gaza. (Comment: Hamas likely views Gaza -- where it wields greater authority -- a more suitable venue to influence the outcome of the discussions. End comment.)

#### Abbas Travels to Tunis

¶4. (C) On May 29, Abbas departed the West Bank for Jordan en route to Tunis for meetings with PLO Political Department head and Fatah Central Committee (FCC) head Farouq Qaddumi. Abbas reportedly intends to seek Qaddumi's support for a PLO faction leaders meeting in Cairo. Abbas and Qaddumi will also discuss Fatah reform, according to sources in Abbas' office. Abbas is expected to return on June 2.

## Erekat Readying Referendum

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15. (C) PLO Chief Negotiator Sa'eb Erekat told APO May 30 that his Negotiations Support Unit is preparing the legal groundwork for a possible national referendum. He anticipated that the National Dialogue would fail and Abbas would move to a referendum, which Hamas would oppose on legal grounds.

Stevens